

Needed

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/43660774) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/43660774>.

Rating:

[Mature](#)

Archive Warning:

[No Archive Warnings Apply](#)

Category:

[M/M](#)

Fandom:

[Call of Duty \(Video Games\)](#)

Relationship:

[John "Soap" MacTavish/Simon "Ghost" Riley](#)

Character:

[John "Soap" MacTavish](#), [Simon "Ghost" Riley](#), [Alejandro Vargas](#),
[John Price \(Call of Duty\)](#), [Kyle "Gaz" Garrick](#)

Additional Tags:

[Angst](#), [Hurt/Comfort](#), [Epilepsy](#), [Seizures](#), [Neurological Disorders](#),
[Sickfic](#), [Arguing](#), [Simon "Ghost" Riley Needs a Hug](#), [Disabled Character](#), [Protective John "Soap" MacTavish](#), [Crying](#), [Aftercare](#),
[Autistic Simon "Ghost" Riley](#)

Language:

[English](#)

Series:

Part 3 of [Epileptic Ghost](#)

Collections:

[Anonymous](#)

Stats:

Published: 2022-12-17 Words: 6,834 Chapters: 1/1

Needed

by Anonymous

Summary

"No one is telling you what to do, Johnny. Bloody hell. I was just saying we should do something else tonight."

"And I told you that I don't want to," Soap counters. "Unlike you, I like to follow through with the plans I make and not disappoint the people around me."

or

Things boil over and an argument ensues. Ghost has a seizure all alone.

Notes

hiiii im back.

sorry for the late update/responses. i just finished my finals!

i hope ppl actually care ab this series bc it's my bby atm <333

anyway enjoy!

-

Soap's POV

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

"Johnny, are you seriously just going to ignore me and keep getting ready?"

Soap huffs a frustrated sigh as he pushes past Ghost once again. The man has decided to stand in the doorway that connects their bedroom and bathroom, just *trying* to be as annoying and inconvenient as possible. It's getting childish at this point and, quite frankly, Soap has had enough of it.

"Yes, Simon. I will continue to ignore you because you don't seem to have an actual reason for not wanting to go to Laswell's anniversary party. And you certainly don't have a reason to keep *me* from going either," Soap retorts as he goes fishing through their closet for a nice shirt. All of his clothes are nicely organized on their respective hangers while most of Ghost's black, wrinkled attire piles on the floor like the slob he is.

Ghost doesn't leave his position, but he does turn around to face his husband. "I just think we should stay in tonight and take it easy, is all. I feel like we've been going to parties for the past three or four weekends now."

Soap rolls his eyes. "Well, that's because we have, sweetheart," he explains right when he finds the button down he was picturing in his head. "It's the holiday season. People are celebrating. I don't know what else to tell you," the Scot goes on to say, perhaps a bit rudier than he needed to. "It's just how the world works."

There's a entitlement to Ghost's voice when he speaks next. "Have you ever considered the fact that all this social interaction can be a bit draining for me sometimes? Physically and emotionally?"

Straightening up at the challenge, Soap glares at Ghost and replies, "And have *you* ever considered the fact that not everything is about you all the time?"

With the weight of that statement hanging heavily in the air, Soap pushes past Ghost one final time and tries to close the door behind himself as he does. The wood doesn't slam shut like he wants it to, instead being forced back open by Ghost's large hand and angry expression. Soap intentionally makes a sound of irritation that doesn't go unheard to the already fuming man.

"What the fuck is that supposed to mean?!" Ghost says defensively. There's no mask to hide his emotions this time.

"It means what I said, Simon," Soap argues as he starts pulling on his clothes. "You don't have to come but just because you don't want to do something doesn't mean that I don't want to, or--or *can't*. You don't make the rules around here, and you're not going to tell me what to do."

Ghost scoffs, putting his arms against the doorframe and completely blocking Soap into this argument. "No one is telling you what to do, Johnny. Bloody hell. I was just saying we should do something else tonight."

"And I told you that I don't want to," Soap counters. "Unlike you, I like to follow through with the plans I make and not disappoint the people around me."

Ouch.

That one might have gone a bit too far. But Ghost is really up Soap's ass at this point and it's driving him crazy. Plus, he has too much pride to take back what he said. So Soap chooses to ignore the way Ghost hesitates before speaking again, deciding only to pay attention to how he's going to take Ghost's next words offensively. No matter what.

"Yeah, so *fuck* disappointing your husband, then. Fuck being there for him when you can just please other people instead, right, Soap?"

And Soap doesn't even have to pretend to take those words to heart. Because what Ghost is saying truly jabbed right through it. He turns slowly to make eye contact with his husband, Ghost's eyes dark and tired but unmistakably full of fury.

"How dare you?" Soap hisses in disbelief. "How fucking dare you sit there and tell me that I'm not there for you when *all I fucking do* is worry about and take care of you?! Every fucking day, Simon."

And Ghost doesn't seem to have a response to that one, shifting his weight back and forth like he regrets what he just said. That makes two of them.

"Now that I finally have a chance to do something for myself, you want to take it away from me. Just like ev--" Soap stops himself, trying to choose his words wisely from here on out. He huffs. "I need a break from it all. And since you don't want to go to the party tonight, I thought it would be a good time for us to have some time apart. So we can cool down."

Ghost seems to only process one thing out of that speech. "A break?" he asks like it's an unbelievable thing to say. "Bloody, hell, Soap. You would do anything to get away from me, wouldn't you? Did the arrogance that powers your hero complex finally run out? Tired of dealing with my problems, that it?"

Soap looks at him in shock, absolutely nothing to say.

"Did you finally realize what you got yourself into by marrying me?" That last sentence sounded vulnerable.

Soap ignores it, too angry to give it pause. "Hell's fuckin' bells. You can't be serious right now!" he shouts, not missing the way Ghost flinches. "I mean, listen to yourself, Simon. Why are we even *talking* about your epilepsy right now? Why did you even bring it up? What does it have to do with tonight?!"

Emotion cracks through Ghost's expression for just a moment. It almost looks like he wants to confess something. But then he just straightens his face and ends up saying, "Did you want to go to the party alone from the beginning?"

It sounds like a genuine question, one that Soap can't believe Ghost is even asking. "Of course not. But with how you're acting right now just because I want to, it doesn't sound so bad." And Soap can't stop ranting. God, just stop, stop, *stop*. *It's hurting his feelings*. "Maybe I *should* just leave. Maybe then if something happens, God-for-fucking-bid, it'll show you how much I'm there for you. Maybe then you'll realize how much you don't appreciate me."

Soap pushes past Ghost again, fully ready to leave at this point.

A beat.

Maybe two.

Then Ghost is turning, meeting Soap's glare and speaking words that are eerily numb. "Maybe you're right. Have a fun night, Johnny."

And that just pisses Soap off even more. As if the complete disregard for the amount of time Soap spends being there for him isn't enough, Ghost won't even acknowledge the very insensitive things Soap is throwing at him. He won't *argue back*. It just makes Soap look like the dick when *he's* the one that started it. It's manipulative. And it's fucking annoying.

So Soap slams the last nail in the coffin, hoping it'll make Ghost feel the same level of anger that he feels.

"Be honest, Ghost. Are you doing this because you want to push away the only person who cares about you or because you just want to be a dick for no reason?"

A long, *long* silence stretches after Soap's inquiry. The words echo around in his head. *The only person who cares about you.* It's an awful thing to say, Soap knows it. And he knows he'll be taking it back later with a much needed apology, but he sees too much Red right now to even consider that very real truth.

Ghost doesn't blink. He just stares daggers into Soap's eyes. Daggers that cut deep, unmerciful and wicked. Ones that support the last words out of his mouth.

"Fuck you."

And then the man slams the bathroom door with him inside, clearly not planning on coming out any time soon.

Soap hesitates in the bedroom, shaking his head as he makes his way over to the door. They shouldn't leave things like this. No one ever knows what could happen. What if these are the last words he says to Ghost?

Soap reaches for the doorknob. But he never actually grabs it.

He just lets out an exhausted sigh, and leaves.

-

Soap probably shouldn't be surprised that the first thing everyone asks him at the party is where Ghost is, but it still annoys the shit out of him nonetheless. The one thing he wanted to do while being here was forget about the man and the argument that they'll eventually have to work through, but no one seems like they're going to let that happen.

Alejandro is the first to say to him, "Hey, hermano. Where's the ghost?" He throws an arm around the Scot easily and brings him into Laswell's home with a drink already in his hand. Tequila. Disgusting.

"Busy," Soap ends up gritting out, shaking the man off his shoulders and making his way towards the alcohol. He's already feeling very, very behind on that part.

"Ay, tranquilo," Alejandro warns, obviously not expecting the sour attitude. "Trouble in paradise, I suppose?"

"Something like that," Soap replies bitterly as he pours himself a generous glass of scotch.

"I see..." Alejandro replies almost worriedly. "Well, tonight is as good of a night as any to get shit-faced off your ass and forget about it all, right?"

Soap knocked back a rather large gulp. "Now you're talking."

By the time Soap has made his way through all the party-goers and has said hello, gushing on about how perfect Laswell and her wife are for a suspicious amount of time, he begins to feel the effects of the alcohol he's taken a liking to.

Soap's not an idiot. He knows that drinking away his problems for a night is going to do nothing for him in the long run. But he also feels like all of his demons have finally caught up to him all at once, and he wants to shove them back down for a few hours. He's just not in the mood to address them yet.

Maybe he never will be.

"What's got your knickers in a bunch?" Gaz suddenly interrupts as he elbows Soap playfully, red solo cup in hand. There's nothing in there but Coca-Cola--Gaz hasn't drank in ages--and Soap finds himself envious of the man's self control.

"Your mum," Soap answers before taking a burning sip from his own cup.

"Wow, good one," Gaz says back. "I suppose it has something to do with the fact that your body guard isn't here to hold you back tonight, huh?"

Soap groans, rolling his eyes. Why is everyone talking to him about Ghost?! As if the man owns him? Isn't there any part of Soap that's even remotely appealing *without* his husband around?

"Piss off, Gaz."

"I'm just saying," Gaz defends, holding his hands up peacefully. "Actually, *everyone* is just saying. It's a bit weird seeing you at such a big celebration like this without your husband, you know?"

"Yeah? Well, maybe everyone should mind their own damn business once in a while," Soap argues, taking another swig. He knows this isn't fair to Gaz. He knows he shouldn't be mad at a man who has nothing to do with why he's so bitter, but he's having trouble keeping it all in. Especially with the toxins that are now floating freely through his bloodstream.

"Geez, MacTavish," Gaz hisses. "Just, try and take it easy tonight, alright? But if you need a ride home later, I'm your guy."

Soap swallows, feeling guilty all over again. Instead of voicing that, though, he sways a bit to the side, catching himself on the counter he leans so heavily against. "Thanks, mate. I appreciate it."

-

Ever since Gaz offered to drive him home later that night, Soap has taken that as an invitation to drink even harder. And it's going straight through him.

After stumbling his way to the toilet, Soap gets his pants undone just in time to relieve himself into the porcelain. He sighs lightly, throwing his head back and looking up at the ceiling as he revels in the senseless feeling of the booze in his veins.

The party goes on around him. The sound of guests cackling from their own poison is muffled by the walls, and it really puts everything into perspective for the Scot. Everyone that's here tonight made the conscious decision to come. They *chose* this--Soap included. He *chose* to celebrate another year of someone else's marriage right after he stomped all over his own.

And while Ghost had said some rather upsetting things to him earlier, Soap's words in return were downright malicious.

He knew this would happen one day. The day where every seizure, every spasm, every thrashing cry for help would inevitably boil over and send Soap into an overload of emotions. It just sucks that anger

was the emotion that prevailed.

It hurts, knowing he took it all out on Ghost. Had almost *blamed* him for it. And now while the man is home alone with nothing else to think about, Soap is out partying with more distractions than he can handle.

And yet here he is. In the restroom. Thinking about the very thing he wanted to leave behind.

Soap flushes the toilet and washes his hands silently, the weight of his phone burning a hole into his back pocket. He can't take it any longer. He grabs for the device, turning the screen on and finding that he has a missed call from Ghost, and a voicemail and that he knows he's not prepared to listen to just yet.

He begins typing in their messages.

Im sorry ab earlier. I never should've said those things to you and I didn't mean it. Are you doing ok?

But then someone is knocking on the bathroom door with a frantic plea for him to hurry up, and just like that, the restroom clarity is gone.

Soap deletes the text. Never sends it.

-

It's almost midnight when Gaz finally takes the drink out of Soap's hand with a motherly, "Alright. I think you've officially had enough, Scotland. Let's get you home, then."

Soap scoffs at the other man but doesn't make a move to fight him. He knows he's right.

As the two make their way out of the house, saying their goodbyes to Laswell and all the other party-goers, Price stops them just before they get out the door. Soap gazes at him lazily as he sways against Gaz, arm hooked around his neck like a life-line. What could the old bastard possibly need now?

"Heading home already, MacTavish?"

"Aye," is all Soap manages to mumble.

"Probably for the best," Price teases. "I'm glad you could make it tonight, son. I know it meant a lot to Laswell that you showed."

Soap barks a laugh, reminded of his own words from earlier about disappointment. "Should tell'at ta, Simon. Tried ta tell'em the same shite earl'er," he slurs.

Price shares a glance with Gaz before coming to Ghost's defense. "It's different for him, lad."

With a wobbly gaze, Soap challenges the man in front of him. "Oh, yeah? How'so?"

A muted emotion causes Price to pull his lips in a tight, pursed line. He always does that when he's upset, or uncomfortable with the matter at hand. It makes more sense when he says the words, "I think you know more than most, Johnny."

The nickname sounds weird on his tongue, and it reminds Soap of his husband. His Ghost. The fragile man that he so undeniably hurt with his words. Words that blamed him for the way he is. Shamed him for it, even. And now, as he tries to swallow that pill, it gets stuck in his throat on the way down, and suddenly Soap can't respond.

"Just," Price begins as he slaps a hand on Soap's shoulder. It sobers the Scot up more than he'd like to admit. "Take it easy on the bloke, yeah? He's been through a lot in his life...and then some. He doesn't need to lose the only person who understands him on top of it all."

The words settle *deep* down in Soap's guts, and he finds himself unable to do anything but nod.

Gaz sends Price an appreciative nod before finally opening the front door and saying, "Have a good rest of your night, Captain."

Price nods in return. "You boys, too."

The walk to Gaz's truck is void of any and all words, and Soap is grateful for that. It really lets him chew on Price's words and forces him to think about the things he had said to Ghost earlier. The fight they had. So out of character for them. Sure, they had their petty disagreements, but nothing has ever gone this far.

And Soap has never practically wished that a seizure would come just

to prove his point. Just so Ghost would struggle without him.

It makes him sick to his stomach even thinking about it.

Gaz must sense this somehow. "If you throw up in my car, you're gonna pay for the interior detailing later," he threatens.

"Not gonna," Soap mumbles, though severely more sober following his own self reflection.

Gaz doesn't seem convinced, but he still helps Soap into the passenger seat with a steady grip. Once Soap is buckled in and Gaz runs around the engine to hop in the driver's seat, they're on the road seconds later.

It's chilly out at this point, the late November air still warming up on the inside of Gaz's pick up. The piece of shit rattles like a motherfucker, and one of the vents doesn't even work, but it somehow warms the Scot up enough to reach for his phone.

His heart sinks the second he sees that he has two more missed calls from Ghost and another voicemail, all from over half an hour ago.

He listens to them both.

"Hey," the first one begins. The anxious pitch to Ghost's voice sends a chill down Soap's spine. *"I'm...I'm sorry about our argument earlier. It wasn't right for me to accuse you of not being there for me when you--fuck. I'd rather talk about this in person. Can you please just come home? I-I really need you right now,"* Ghost confesses shakily. *"I mean you don't have to. You can stay--I just...I don't want to keep you from...You know what? Just stay. Don't worry about it."* He clears his throat. *"Enjoy your night, Johnny. Really. I...I love you."*

The line goes dead.

Gaz must see his distress out of the corner of his eye because he keeps glancing over at him and eventually asks, "What?"

Soap plays the second message.

"Johnny," Ghost's voice whines through the speaker. *"J'nnny, 'm sorry. 'm sorry, J'nnny. P-Please..."* Soap pales at the sound of sobbing. *"Don' feel well, Johnny. Please, come. Come 'ome. 'm sorry. 'm sorry, J'nnny. Won' do it 'gain."* He somehow cries harder, whimpering like Soap has left him for good. *"Pr'mise, Johnny."*

Soap puts his hand over his mouth, absolutely traumatized at what he's hearing.

Not only is Ghost very clearly about to have a seizure in the second voicemail, but he's also trying so desperately to get help from Soap, knowing he's the source of safety. And Soap...never answered him. Didn't even call him back. Didn't text. Didn't *try*. He just left him there--all alone--to deal with it by himself.

Just like he told Ghost he would.

Fuck.

This is going to do some irreversible damage to the already emotionally-stunted man.

"Soap," Gaz pesters from behind the wheel. "What's going on?"

That's right when the recording ends, shutting off after a few pitiful weeps into the receiver.

Soap lowers the phone from his ear, turning to Gaz with wide, desperate eyes and begging him, "Hurry."

And that's all Gaz needs to hear.

They pull up to the house a little over ten minutes later, finding that not a single light is on inside. Soap isn't sure how to feel about that. If Ghost had a seizure, and he very likely did, it's been over for some time at this point. And Soap wonders how the man was able to manage the effects on his own.

Not a single drop of scotch is in his system by now. Soap feels more sober than he ever has in his entire life by the time he's swinging Gaz's passenger door open and marching up to the house.

"Give me a ring later and let me know how you're both doing," Gaz calls from the truck, the window having been rolled down to accommodate his request.

Soap is too anxious to give him anything but a thumbs up and a weary, "Thanks for the ride home!"

Gaz nods once, hanging around to make sure Soap gets inside before pulling off with one final wave.

The house is pitch black and echoic when Soap steps into the foyer.

He flicks on a light or two as he takes off his shoes in a hurry and starts making his way upstairs to their bedroom. There's absolutely no sound, which wouldn't be out of character for any other home in the middle of the night, but it makes Soap more nervous. For some reason, he expected a big fiasco. An emergency that he would immediately take into his own hands--do absolutely anything to fix.

But it seems like Soap has already missed that opportunity. This? This is the aftermath. The part that Soap *hates*.

Because it's uncomfortable. Because it's hard. Because it's difficult to address the consequences of something head on. And sometimes it's just easier to pretend like everything is alright, even though it's not. Even though it's unreasonable.

Their bedroom door is shut when Soap reaches the top of the stairs. No light peaks under the door. No voices through the wood. No movement. It concerns Soap a little. Is Ghost even in there?

He knocks softly, choosing to announce his presence rather than sneak up on a man who already has a hard time sleeping.

"Simon?" he calls through the door.

Nothing.

Soap tries the handle and thankfully finds it to be unlocked. As he pushes it open, he finds their personal space to be much like the rest of the house. Dark, quiet, and calm. It almost seems normal.

But Soap isn't convinced that easily. So he walks to Ghost's side of the bed and turns on the lamp sitting on his nightstand. The room instantly lights up just enough for Soap to see the man's head poking out from under the blanket.

Soap let's out a breath. He's okay.

The sleeping man has that god damn mask on--not a good indicator for how he's doing mentally--and he has the blanket pulled up to his nose. Soap will never understand how he doesn't suffocate like that. He personally needs as much space as possible. Not only a hot sleeper, but an irritable one. He's pushed Ghost's sleepy cuddles off of him many times before.

The simple memory makes him smile, reaching out to touch the small bit of skin that's unprotected by the balaclava.

"Simon?" Soap calls gently. His featherlight touch makes Ghost stir, but he doesn't actually wake. "Hey."

Ghost shifts more then, Soap not letting up until he knows his husband is okay. The man doesn't open his eyes, but he does groan, mumbling out a, "Hmph?"

"Wake up, love," Soap badgers. He feels his anxiety dwindling at the sound of Ghost responding, but he needs to know for sure that he's alright.

The persistence has Ghost cracking his eyes open slowly, the dim light likely beaming to his tired pupils. He grumbles, closing his eyes again and groaning, "Wha?"

"Are you okay?" Soap asks him. "Did you have a seizure earlier?"

This for some reason makes Ghost flip onto his stomach, turning his head around to face away from both the light and Johnny. He takes a second to resituate himself in his new position before he answers, "No."

Soap stops, confused. "You didn't?" he clarifies.

"No, Johnny," Ghost whines sleepily into the pillow.

Soap looks around the room for indications that he's not telling the truth. When he finds none, absolutely nothing out of place, he turns back to his husband. "Are you sure?"

But this time he gets no response at all. Not even an annoyed protest.

So he decides to let it go. Maybe Ghost was just trying to guilt trip him into coming home earlier when he called. Maybe by 'not feeling well' he just meant that he was upset about what happened. Maybe those slurred words and hurried speech were the effect of anxiety rather than his condition.

Or, at least, that's what Soap tells himself as he removes his clothes and crawls into bed beside the man. The thought of sleeping on the couch to give Ghost some space crosses his mind for only a second, knowing that it might just make things worse and make this disagreement more of a 'fight.'

Soap falls asleep with his back to his husband, and doesn't plan on moving.

-

Some amount of unknown hours later, Soap is jolted from his sleep.

He sits there for a second and waits for something to come. What had woken him? A sound? A nightmare that he for some reason can't recall?

It doesn't take long before he hears the unmistakable sound of a whimper. The whimper of a person. That's when Soap flips over and finds that the other side of the bed is empty, the bedsheets pulled back and completely lacking the presence of his husband.

His heart jumps into his throat. "Simon?" he calls with a sleepy rasp.

The culprit seems to cut their cries off at the sound of Soap's wakefulness. It's actually the lack of noise that tells Soap where the whimpers are coming from. It sounds like they're on the other side of the bed. Perhaps on the...floor?

Turning his lamp on and finding no one else in the room, Soap sits up fully and says again, "Simon?"

Total silence. It only makes him more suspicious. So Soap throws the blankets off of himself and cringes when his bare feet touch the cold floor. But that doesn't slow him down one bit in walking around to the other side of their bed and finding a scene that he was really not expecting to see.

In front of him, curled up in a ball on the ground and shaking, lays that large silhouette that belongs to none other than his husband. For the briefest of moments, Soap fears that Ghost is having a seizure, given the unusual position of his body. But then the man is turning his head to look up at him with controlled movement. Only his eyes are visible through the mask, but they nonetheless do the job in showing Ghost's immense amount of shame.

Soap crouches down instantly. "Simon?! What happened?" he asks in a panic.

Ghost tries to push himself up into what Soap can only assume is a standing position, but he doesn't get very far with the terrible tremble

in his arms. He shakes far too much to actually get anywhere, and his eyebrow furrows beneath the mask from the effort.

"Sorry," is all Ghost says back. "Didn' mean to wake you."

A gasp is ripped from Soap's throat the second one of Ghost's elbows gives out from the weight of his body. He reaches out to catch him, making note of the fact that this is not typical weakness for his husband. This is weakness from a seizure, the after-effects of his muscles spasming out of control and leaving his body tender and sore.

"Simon..." he chides.

But this doesn't stop Ghost's attempts at getting up. He actually manages to get onto his knees at that point, grabbing the bedframe with tremulous hands as he tries so desperately to stand. It's an awful thing to witness.

"Baby, slow down," Soap says, holding his hands out to help. It's pointless--Ghost ignores his assistance.

"M'fine," the man grits out, grunting as one of his legs gives out this time. The sound of his kneecap slamming into the hardwood floor is sickening.

"Okay, that's enough. Just relax," Soap says as he takes both of Ghost's hands into his own.

"No," Ghost insists. "Need the toilet."

Soap nods. "Okay. Alright, let's get you to the toilet, then, love."

Ghost doesn't say anything to that, simply trying to stand all over again without Soap's help. Soap doesn't let that slide, instead choosing to hook one of Ghost's arms around his neck and slowly lift the two of them to their feet. He uses one hand to hold Ghost's arm still while he uses the other to secure tightly around his waist.

It's a bit of struggle, but eventually the two of them begin to shuffle their way towards the bathroom, the only thing lighting their way being the small lamp by the bed.

The sounds Ghost lets out in pain go right to Soap's heart. The man can barely get one foot in front of the other, often tripping over himself and making Soap pause so he can find his footing. Without the Scot there, he would be helpless in getting to the toilet on his own.

Slow and steady is how they make their way, and Soap encourages his husband with every step. "Come on, love. You've got it. You're doing great."

"Fuck," Ghost just about sobs when his knees give out again. Soap catches him in an instant.

"Almost there, Si. Keep going," Soap motivates.

Ghost just shakes his head and makes a noise of disagreement. It sounds panicked, and Soap can feel the man start moving faster. Or at least trying to.

"It's alright. Just take your time."

"Johnny," Ghost whines like a warning.

Soap runs his hand along his side gently. "You've got it."

But then, out of nowhere, Ghost's movements go from frantic and in a hurry to completely rigid and still. The man freezes. It's like every muscle in his body locks up with tension and he's suddenly shaking like a leaf in the wind against Soap's strong form.

It doesn't make sense, so Soap looks up at his husband just to make sure he isn't having another seizure of some kind. And what he finds instead is swimming eyes and a look of guilt. Ghost's gaze is boring down into the floor below him and his exposed skin is turning red from embarrassment. But embarrassment about what, exactly?

"Simon?" Soap asks.

There's a moment where Soap thinks the man won't respond, but he then he just does.

"M'sorry, Johnny. I-I--" and then he stops, words stuck in his throat behind one lone sob. It scares Soap shitless.

"What's wrong?"

"I..." Ghost begins again, almost like he's trying to work himself up to say it. "I didn't make it. I pissed myself," he rushes to say. "Johnny, I'm pissing myself."

Once the initial shock fades away, Soap looks down at Ghost's front to find that he indeed has pissed himself--or, rather, still is, given the growing darkness on his sweatpants and the subtle hiss coming from

his groin.

It all makes Soap's heart shatter into a million pieces, wondering how awful the earlier seizure must have been to have left Ghost as vulnerable as *this*.

Though, not wanting to make Ghost feel any more humiliation than he already must, Soap addresses the situation like it's a normal happening. "That's okay, baby. You're really sore right now. It's not a big deal."

Ghost grunts, body still stiff as a board against his husband. "I can't...hold it. I'm so sorry."

And Soap just wants to cry. How could he have left Ghost like this? "It's alright, m'eudail. Just go ahead and finish up here. It'll be easier to clean that way, anyway."

This seems to make Ghost more uneasy. His trembles increase ten fold as the pissing comes to an end and he says, "I'll clean up the mess, J'nny. I pr'mise."

Soap hushes him. "No, no, no. Don't worry about that right now, sweetheart," he says. "I'll clean it up later. Let's just go ahead and get *you* cleaned up in here, okay?"

The wet pants must be clinging to Ghost's leg a bit irritably at this point because he doesn't fight this notion at all. He just nods unsteadily and begins to creep the rest of the way towards the bathroom, Soap under his arm and practically carrying him the distance. But never once does Soap complain. Because he would do this again for his husband. And again and again.

After sitting the man on the toilet, Soap goes to start removing the sopping fabric from Ghost's hips, but the larger man stops him with a hand on his wrist, grip weak but confident.

"No."

Soap frowns. "You want to do it yourself?" he guesses.

Ghost nods, letting go of Soap's arm. "Do it myself, Johnny."

"Okay," Soap agrees with some reluctance. But despite his worry, he steps away from his husband and gives him the space he needs.

This doesn't seem to be enough for Ghost. "No, Johnny..."

Soap looks at him, confused. "What?"

Ghost seems to hesitate before his next words. It doesn't seem like he's too sure about them. "Wanna do it 'lone. Can you...please go?"

This hurts Soap so much more than he ever thought it could. He never pictured seeing the day where his help isn't welcome--isn't *wanted*. The day when Ghost is so uncomfortable around his presence that he doesn't want to undress in front of him.

"Simon," Soap whispers, not trusting his voice to remain stable. "Did I...?"

But Ghost won't look at him. "Please?" is his only reply.

And Soap won't make him ask twice. He leaves the room with a firm nod and a wobbly lip, closing the door and stepping over the puddle of piss that Ghost left behind.

Instead of letting his tears fall, he decides to busy himself by cleaning up the mess on the floor. He grabs a towel or two and soaks up the urine quickly, spraying disinfectant and floor cleaner on top of it just to have *something* to do. Some way to help.

It's hard to ignore the little sounds of exertion coming from the bathroom as Ghost undresses himself, but Soap does so in stride, letting the man have the privacy he requested.

It's not until he hears the sound of the shower turning on that he decides to intrude.

With a gentle knock, Soap calls through the door, "Si?"

There's a moment. And then Ghost hesitantly replies, "Yes?"

"Are you... Are you getting in the shower?" Soap asks, though the answer to that is obvious.

"Was..." Ghost says back, leaving the conversation open for suggestions. Soap takes it.

"Will you--Is it okay if I join you?" Soap asks through the door. He's hopeful, but also terrified of how Ghost may respond.

Eventually he hears, "Suppose." And then the door is being unlocked

and pulled open by Ghost himself, the still-fragile man holding himself up against the wall next to the frame. He looks exhausted, hurt, broken, and Soap can't help but feel like it's because of him.

It's always because of him.

"Thank you," Soap says with a wet smile like Ghost is doing him the favor.

When the two of them are under the spray, Ghost faces away from Soap towards the water, leaving the Scot cold and shivering behind him. He doesn't mind, though, because now he can secretly examine Ghost's body for any bruises, bumps, or cuts. He doesn't find any, until Ghost turns around to face him, that is.

That's when he sees a rather gnarly gash splitting down the corner of Ghost's bottom lip. It's red and swollen, having recently scabbed over in an attempt to heal the wound his husband has clearly neglected to tend to.

"What happened here?" Soap says, bringing his thumb up to the cut.

Ghost flinches a bit, almost like he had forgotten that the laceration was there. He looks down in shame, then, finally willing himself to admit, "Had a seizure earlier. Think I hit it on the way down." And, for having been through war, Ghost looks awfully defeated at that confession.

Soap stands there for a second, not sure what to do. But then his body steps in on autopilot, getting on his toes to wrap his arms around Ghost's shoulders and burying his face in his neck.

"I'm so sorry," Soap whispers out as the tears begin to fall. "I'm so sorry that I wasn't there for you. I should've known." He thinks back to Ghost's words. *Have you ever considered the fact that all this social interaction can be a bit draining for me sometimes?* And, *So fuck disappointing your husband, then. Fuck being there for him when you can just please other people instead, right, Soap?*

Ghost only hesitates for a moment before wrapping his arms around Soap in return. "No," he says firmly. "You couldn't have known. *I'm* sorry. For not...for not recognizing how much you're there for me. For not considering how much this all affects you too. I'm helpless without you, Johnny."

"No," Soap argues. "You are *not* helpless, do you hear me?"

"I am."

"You're *not*. And all those things I said to you earlier were not true. I didn't mean them, and I'm so, so sorry. I never wanted to hurt you that way, Simon. Really, I didn't."

"I know..." Ghost assures.

"I was just *frustrated* because it all gets a bit overwhelming at times and I don't know how to handle it all and--and--"

"Johnny--"

"It just boiled over and I said things I didn't mean and I'm so sorry, baby. I'm *sorry*. I *do* wanna help you. I wanna be there for you all the time. I *want* to take care of you when you need me. In sickness and in health, Simon. I meant it, that day we got married. I *meant* it--"

Ghost rubs up and down his back soothingly. And it just makes it all worse. *Soap* should be comforting *him*.

"I did this to you," Soap cries into his collarbone. The shower rains down on them. "I said I wished something would happen and it did. I did this to you just to prove a point."

"Shhh," Ghost shushes. "You didn't do this to me, darling. I was already feeling ill earlier today. That's why I didn't want to go. I was jus'...bein' a dick about it."

Soap pulls away just enough to look up at the man. "Really?"

"Mhm," Ghost promises, kissing Soap on the forehead.

"Well..." Soap says, still looking for some way the he's to blame for all of this. "I'm sorry I wasn't there for you earlier."

Ghost brings a large hand up to his face, wiping away the tears that have now mixed with the steaming water from the showerhead.

"You're not always gonna be there, Johnny. There will be times when I'm going at it alone. And there will also be times where you need a break."

Soap sighs then, knowing Ghost is right and not wanting to admit it. "I guess... I guess you're right."

Ghost just hums, lightly scratching the knobs on Soap's spine and leaning into the wall to hold the both of their weight. It's so relaxing,

the Scot almost falls asleep in his arms, the warm water wrapping around him like a soft blanket and slowly lulling him into his dreams. But then the larger man is shaking him, so gently, and saying, "I'm still feeling a bit sore here. Can we go back to bed?"

Immediately stepping into action, dying to be helpful again, Soap promises, "Of course, honey. I'll go anywhere with you."

Ghost smiles tiredly in return, shutting the water off behind him.

The cold hits them the second they pull back the shower curtain, but Soap quickly fixes that by grabbing the nearest towels and wrapping them around the two of them.

Soap also helps Ghost get dressed without complaint, just then noticing that the soiled pants and sweat through shirt that Ghost was wearing to bed earlier were in fact his own. It's common for the man to do when he misses the Scot. It makes Soap's heart flutter, feeling needed all over again.

When they finally settle in for the night, Soap spooning Ghost like the body furnace he is, it feels like everything that has ever brought them stress just falls away. Because they have each other, in each other's arms. And they're not going to let go this time.

No, never again.

End Notes

let me know what u think!

comments keep me writing :)

<3

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!